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Let The Bible Be Opened!

BY JOHN PAUL JONES

THE churches of America recently concluded their celebrations of the four hundredth anniversary of the printing of the Bible in English. By way of pageantry, special services, exhibitions and public meetings, the Bible has again been highly extolled. After it was over, I found myself musing on the fact that I, a Protestant minister, took almost no interest in the festivities. Once I would have participated actively and spontaneously. Now I have held back. Yet I have no hesitancy in acknowledging that to me the Bible is still the book of books.

I held back in part because such celebrations have a way of playing into the hands of those who would make of the Bible a great obscure idol. Bibliolatry already has something of a death grip upon people generally. The Bible is the modern substitute for the ark of the covenant, that strange and awesome contrivance which the Hebrews believed would bring victory to an insignificant army against the legions of an empire if it were carried into the array of battle with proper reverence and ceremony. There are plenty of people who still regard the mere possession of the Bible, preferably in a huge volume with gilt edges and curious pictures, as something to ward off danger and incur favor with the Almighty. I do not want to have any part in the encouragement of that sort of thing.

There is, however, a more deep-seated reason which accounts for my lack of interest in these four hundredth anniversary observances. This involves a conviction that responsible leaders have not wisely used a great opportunity. It is generally acknowledged that the Bible is becoming very much of a closed book to the reading public. The causes of this seem to be largely ignored. If they had been squarely and intelligently faced, the occasion might have been used to bring about a change. There are reasons why the Bible is not read today. They are not reasons which inhere by virtue of necessity, but

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so long as they stand there will be no revival of interest in, or use of, the Bible. No amount of veneration or public display will have any permanent results.

II

It is unfortunate that the two great divisions of Christendom represent extreme and opposing views on the use of the Bible. The Roman church has insisted that the Bible should not be read by the public at large —not even among believers. The Protestant church has stood for the open Bible and has treated the Roman position with indifference or scorn. It is not necessary for our purpose to enter into a discussion of the merits of either position. The Protestant attitude is that of the English-speaking world. It is deeply embedded in our cultural tradition, and its influence has been profound.

Protestantism, however, has reached a state of paradox in this respect. It has insisted that the Bible should be read but is not able to keep it open. It has managed to put the Bible at the disposal of people generally, but its use is steadily declining. It has inculcated a spirit of reverence and adoration for it as the book of books, but it has failed to make it a source of practical guidance in daily living. Tireless in its emphasis that the sacred scriptures of the Old and New Testament should always be considered the book of life, the Protestant constituency is nevertheless turning a deaf ear. Young people of today, and many people not so young, have little interest in the Bible. Multitudes of people, well educated otherwise, have only the vaguest notions about the inspired word.

The paradox is intensified by the fact that Protestantism is largely responsible for this state of affairs. Sponsoring the open Bible, the churches have, nevertheless, inaugurated the forces which are tightening the covers of the sacred volume. To begin with there could hardly have been designed a method of presenting the Bible better calculated to conceal its essential nature and truth. A library has been confined to one volume. The people have been handed a book, huge, strange and obscure. Out of a mistaken reverence, the notion that the Bible is its own best interpreter has been encouraged to the exclusion of vital aids for its interpretation. Artificially divided into chapters and verses, printed in a language classical but unfamiliar, without essential introduction, treating matters of origin and chronology as irrelevant, the use of the Bible has been jeopardized most effectively.

I remember that as a lad my father told me I should read Shakespeare. But he did not introduce Shakespeare to me in the happiest way. He purchased a one volume edition of Shakespeare's works. It was a formidable book with heavy bindings, gilt-edged paper, decorated margins, printed in small type on thin paper, with a generous interspersing of italics. Its notes were of the scholar, for the scholar and by the scholar. Its pictures were strange to my experience. I tried to read Shakespeare out of this ponderous volume and I failed. Fortunately I early encountered a wise teacher in English. I shall always be grateful to Hazel Shelp. She was my teacher for only one year and I have not seen or heard of her since. She put into my hands a small volume called "Twelfth Night." It was printed like any other book. It had a brief introduction that told something about the origin of the play, its plot, its purpose and its history. It had notes that were simple and helpful. With this book and this teacher I encountered a thrilling experience reading Shakespeare, and I remember it with pleasure and profit to this day.

But no Sunday school teacher or day school teacher, not even in college, did anything of this kind for me in regard to the Bible. Until my days in the theological seminary the Bible remained a strange and obscure book. It is not difficult for me to understand how the physical make-up of the Bible discourages, if not prevents, its use.

Even more serious has been the widespread usage of the Bible as a collection of proof texts. It was in the days of my early adolescence that I heard a sermon preached during an evangelistic campaign on the text, "There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism." The preacher was of the majority religious persuasion in our community, who called themselves Disciples of Christ, but were generally known as Campbellites. My own people were Presbyterian and decidedly in the minority. In matters generally the Presbyterians probably exercised a power and influence out of proportion to their numbers. But when the Campbellite revival meetings came they counted for little. Everything else was swept aside. We all listened to sermons like this one on the one faith, one spirit, one baptism.

PROOF TEXTS AND BIGOTRY

To my childhood mind it was a momentous defense of the one straight, narrow, exclusive way—the Campbellite way to salvation. There *was* one Lord, one faith, and emphatically *one baptism*. People generally believed in this emphasis, but they were divided into two camps. The majority were for immersion, the minority for sprinkling, and each searched the Scriptures for proof texts. What troubled my childish mind was the fact that they couldn't both be right, and many an agonizing hour I spent brooding over the fact that I and mine might be wrong and therefore doomed.

Without anyone to help me, I struggled for years through the long maze of sermons which used Scripture as an encouragement to bigotry. Indeed, it appeared to me that the dominant interest in the Bible centered on the book as a source of quotations to support opposing and contrary dogma and opinion. The world of today prides itself on having put much of this behind. It is doubtful, however, if the principle is abandoned. What has happened has been some refinement on method and tactics. The Bible is still the great book of proof texts, and it lends itself to bigotry in the same manner. When the issues are not hotly contested or when interest lags, we are given to milder forms.

The Constitution of the Presbyterian church requires of all its ministers and elders an affirmative answer to this question, "Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?" The authority for this question is to be found in Second Timothy 3:16; Second Peter, 1:19-21; Isaiah 8:20, etc. The second question likewise requiring a catechetical affirmation is this, "Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this church as containing the sys-

tem of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?" Presbyterians make the nice, mild, conceited claim that they have been able to discover from the Bible the system of doctrine which is taught there. The plain inference is that other sects and beliefs have not been so fortunate. The final justification after argument is over is to the proof text, cited in the same manner as Baptists or Episcopalians marshall their text for other systems of doctrine.

The history of Protestantism, to a lamentable degree, has been the searching of the Scriptures for texts to support the contradictory doctrines of a hundred Protestant sects. It is the old story of interpretation arrived at first and bolstered up later. If one doubts that this per-

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sists in our own day he has only to read the excerpts from Sunday sermons printed in Monday newspapers. For this reason also people are inclined to let the Bible alone.

Yet it is not unlikely that the use of the Bible for pious exhortation is more responsible than anything else for the dwindling list of readers. The Bible has been extolled principally as a religious book in the narrow sense of the word. Reference to it has been from the point of view of the sin and doom of man, and the necessity for his seeking a salvation which only a few shall find. From the earliest days of the Sunday school to the declining years of the devout, the Bible has been used for endless moralizing. It has come to have a distinct other-worldly atmosphere which separates it from present-day realities. If one consults the average church hymnal he will find this well illustrated by the hymns dedicated to the Bible. For the most part they picture the Bible as "our guide and chart of realms beyond the sky," or as an instrument "whereby we trace our path when wont to stray." The main reference to it is as a source to which one should turn for "heavenly teaching."

In truth the Bible is a library. It contains writings about almost everything that touches human life. It is anything but a book of pious exhortation intended mainly as a prelude to a prayer meeting or for reading at religious services. Much of the Bible was written by men who at the time of their writings were thinking no more of heaven than Walt Disney when he is drawing Mickey Mouse.

NOT A SOURCE BOOK FOR MORALIZING

The use of the Bible for pious exhortation and endless moralizing is intellectually reprehensible and morally stultifying. We read the story, let us say, of the Good Samaritan, and start at once to draw lessons. But the lesson is in the story. The story has survived because it is a work of art as well as a vehicle of truth. It has said something in the complete and final way. Nothing is present that does not belong. Nothing essential has been left out. The appeal which it makes is both lasting and powerful. This is so because it is a subtle and subconscious appeal. It convicts a man of his shortcomings without exposing him to the public gaze. It teaches him something without arousing a sense of inferiority. It begins the work of self-catharsis and self-restoration. Moralizing on the story is like attempting to improve a great statue by daubing at it. One will only succeed in blurring the story or jeopardizing its effect.

This does not mean that the Bible as a whole or in part should be presented or read without commentary and explanation. Something does need to be said to make clear the implications of much that is in the Bible. It may be that people fall into the error of moralizing because they do not know what better to do. Information about the origin of a story, the setting or background from which it comes, its historical illusions and inferences, its relation to the life of the time or since, and many other matters, stand in need of light and elucidation. But that is a far different matter from drawing lessons. It is quite different from retelling a story in a less effective way and pointing out its meaning. How does one know what it may or should mean to another? If one presumes upon his own intellectual discernment and ethical vision, let him accept the responsibility thereof and not charge it up to other teachings or personalities!

The remarkable thing is that the influence of the Bible has been so great notwithstanding all the abuse it has received. It is like a great painting whose glory will be discovered by some no matter at what disadvantage it may be displayed. A masterpiece is a masterpiece whether people know it or not. But it is tragic irony when the attempt to display it runs afoul of the darkness which obscures it.

III

It was incumbent upon the custodians of Holy Writ to begin the four hundredth anniversary celebrations with humble confession of sin. The first call should have been for repentance. It is high time to renounce those indefensible theories, methods and practices which

have brought about such abuse of the Bible. But this cardinal fact appears to have been overlooked, or for the most part ignored. Certainly it nowhere occupied a place of prominence in the flood of oratory and printed material let loose upon the public.

Such a beginning would have opened the way for an emphasis which might have captured the imagination of the present generation. When the notion of the Bible as principally an elongated tract on dogma and morality is laid aside, the way is made straight for an appreciation of its true nature and glory. It may well be that the Bible is the greatest independent library in the world. The pietist and the skeptic alike, the devout and the indifferent, will find its pages as moving and vital as anything ever written. The Bible is the incomparable literary masterpiece of the solemn, baffling and magnificent human adventure. But it is a library of books, not a single volume.

Is one thrilled by stories of adventure? Many pages of many books in the Bible literally quiver with such stories. They begin in simplicity with the dawn of history and increase in tenseness and complexity through two millenniums. They include the charm and naivete of folklore and legend; the pathos and grandeur of momentous historical sequence. Does one demand poetry that plumbs the depths of human feeling and aspiration? Who has excelled the Psalmists and Jesus or surpassed the lyricism of prophetic ecstasy? Does one believe in romance? Let him search for stories more tender and strong than the Hebrews' narratives of love. No bard has ever sung the way of a man with a maid with clearer throated joy than the unknown author of the Song of Songs. Nor has one more perfectly blended the harmony of body and spirit.

Is one philosophically inclined? Then the whole Bible is grist for his mill. No collection of books in any language has been more of a stimulus to thought than this all-embracing human chronicle. From Genesis to Revelation men of contemplation and men of action pursue the elusive mystery of life. Statesmen and prophets search the earth and the heavens. Charlatans play upon the weaknesses of people and scoundrels exploit their strength. Mystics and saints translate their intuitions into noble dreams and on the anvils of experience forge the truths of the inspired life. Reformers and zealots pursue their brief and amazing ways and leave their legacies of confusion and chimera. Skeptics voice their cynicism and their despair. Job achieves the classic formulation of man's complaint against the Gods and Jesus makes the incomparable answer. Who by searching can find greater than these?

HUMAN LIFE IN PICTURES

The Bible is the penman's portrait of human life, unexcelled in contrast and color. It is the story of saint and sinner, dreamer and pedant, the wise and the foolish, the hero and the coward, the victorious and the defeated. Its literature ranges all the way from the sublime to the ridiculous. It runs the whole gamut from the sane and sensible to the strange and fantastic. No chord of the human heart is left untouched.

Within the pages of the Bible is the record of men seized with magnificent obsessions, and also of men plagued by weird and diabolical machinations. The drama of human life is unfolded within its covers. The sound and fury, the strife and the futility, are there. Passion and tenderness are laid bare. The glory and the terror are uncovered. Pride and prejudice are humbled; simple humanity is exalted. The might of the spirit is revealed; the inscrutable mystery is intensified. The will to live is not bereft of nourishment. The knowledge of the Bible is a liberal education.

IV

Such an understanding of the Bible will not detract from its usefulness for religion. It will, however, lessen its value as a source book for dogma. It will make obsolete many of the spurious notions unhappily associated with the Bible. A priori theories of inspiration, the historicity of miracles, the various philosophies of history, a fixed and rigid scheme of salvation, scientific notions based on the Scripture and such like things will cease to be of concern. This will not be loss but great gain. People will continue to find support for various and particular religious beliefs in the Bible, but within a wide diversity of faith and practice it will be possible to unite in an emphasis on things most vital.

The value of the Bible for religion is universal, and it can be so stated as to make a universal appeal. From the religious point of view the Bible may be looked upon as the unfailing source of strength, comfort and hope for the frustrations of life. The Bible is a testimony to the unmeasurable vitality of the human spirit. It presents a strategy of defeat. It is a mithridate to tragedy.

Man that is born of woman must find his way in the world through a maze of peril and perplexity. With varying degrees of fortune the journey is made. For some it is brief and terrible; for others it is more tolerable; for a few abundantly satisfying. Yet all the weight of this life bears the inexorable concomitant of tragedy. Each human life moves relentlessly, one day after another, to its own destruction. The march is made with hopes, purposes, aspirations, which may or may not be fulfilled, and still the end is always—dissolution. A fund of experience is all that one can be certain of. Even the nature of this is obscure. It is an object of faith.

The midwestern community in which I grew to maturity during the first years of the century was quite a normal community, and in some ways particularly well favored. It was rural and semi-urban, moderately prosperous and settled with people of good stock. The manner and method of life veered away from extremes. Yet when I view it in retrospect it is the tragic elements that overshadow all else. Grief and frustration were by all odds the momentous issues and faced always by people ill prepared. A baby tumbled into the open fire. A child was kicked to death by a mule. A boy fell into a saw mill. An emotional but guileless girl became an unmarried mother. A struggling father and husband went blind. A baffled mother and wife committed suicide. A prominent citizen was rejected and vilified for the independence of his mind. A neighbor shot his friend in a blind fury of rage. A good name was ruined by gossip. The crops failed or a bank closed, leaving behind the weight of misery and mystery.

It is little short of appalling to remember what has happened to some of the boys and girls who formed the circle of social relationships in which I was reared. There was Mary who came from a good home. She married one of the most likable of her school companions and was settled in a happy life. Within the course of five years her father failed in business and took his life, and her husband became a victim of tuberculosis. Untrained in any manner of self-support she and her fatherless children are condemned to poverty, and to what else no one knows. Janet was voted the most popular and beautiful girl of her class. But Janet married a man who was unworthy of her; who crushed and mangled her personality. Long since life has been over for her, and no man knows what queries of the brain or possible anguish of heart filled her last despairing hours. Elmer was my special friend whose bright red hobby-horse fascinated me and whose endless supply of building blocks made me jealous. Elmer built castles with his blocks and then built castles in the air without blocks. He dreamed dreams and he saw a promised land into which he would move when he became full grown. But the bugle sounded and Elmer went away. The promised land was never entered. Today his bones lie beneath the soil of Flanders Field.

These are but some of the stories about people, good people, average people, that I have known within a small circle and over a few years. But such stories can be duplicated anywhere. Sooner or later the heavy hand of tragedy is laid upon us all. Hopes are blasted; promises are broken; dreams vanish; the plans of a lifetime are set at naught. Not one can avoid the hour in which despairing eyes are lifted to an unanswering heaven and the voice cries out, "My heart is pained within me and the terrors of death have fallen about me."

A BOOK OF TRAGEDY

It is not a matter of accident or decree of fate that so much of the world's literature deals with the tragic elements of life. Tragedy is always and everywhere at the center of human existence. The Bible is the library supreme of religion because this theme runs through it from the beginning to the end. It is more than the story of high achievement, the revelation of great ideals, the incomparable literary masterpiece of human adventure. It is the story of man in a tragic world. It is the record of the eternal quest in adversity and mystery, of the discipline of the spirit through suffering, of victories plucked from defeats, of man triumphant even over death.

The earliest stories in the Bible and the last are reminiscent of the strategy of defeat. The greatest story posits the theme of tragedy in the eternal order and makes it center in the heart of God. It is the primitive tribe wandering the earth, stalked by hunger and plague, but counting its misery of little import for the meager excellencies of an unfolding dream. It is Moses sighting the promised land after a lifetime of weariness, only to be denied entrance, yet closing his eyes in peace, resigned in the knowledge that God was preparing "some better thing" for those who would come after. It is Ruth sorrowing with her mother-in-law, and Rachel weeping over her children, yet not utterly despairing. It is David and Jonathan, loyal to the friendship which put both at disadvantage. It is Hosea, bearing the anguish of a faithless wife, thereby learning tenderness and the ennoblement of vicarious suffering. It is Isaiah and Jeremiah, rejected and persecuted, but holding fast to the righteousness of eternal decrees. It is the Psalmist, cut off from his homeland and the temple of his God, nursing his misery in exile, yet learning to sing the Lord's song in a strange land—and with deeper beauty and strength. It is Saul of Tarsus, obedient to the light of a new awakening until homeless and condemned, but finding peace that passeth all understanding. It is Jesus, preaching and achieving a way of life that makes all things new, yet confessing that the just must suffer for the unjust, and proving that he who would lose his life shall find it.

V

Let the Bible be opened! People need it and people will want it when they know what it is and how it should be used. If the emphasis suggested above can be impressed upon the mind of the public the Bible may yet become a book of well-thumbed pages instead of a fetish and an ornament. There is one proviso.

The Bible must be re-edited as a library and presented in more sensible form. It should be divided into at least a dozen volumes and printed as other books of the day. One volume should gather together the Hebrew legends and folklore. One should combine and integrate the historical narratives. Another should include codes and legislation with the proper sequence of development. There should be a volume of Hebrew poetry; possibly two, with the Psalms separated from the rest. There should be two volumes of the Prophets—one major, the other minor. But not the length of books nor contemporary or hereditary prestige should decide who is major and who is minor. Ezekiel belongs with the minor prophets; Jonah with the major and Nahum might be left out altogether. There should be a separate volume for the literature of question and protest.

In the New Testament the story of Jesus should be in two volumes. The first should contain the synoptic tradition, and the second the Gospel of John and kindred literature. Proper explanation should be made for the division. The Letters of Paul should comprise another volume. Still another could be made up of various and general epistles. Possibly still another volume should be provided for the Book of Acts. A final volume marked "for scholars only" might include such books as Daniel and Revelation. These are of little value to the general reader and in times past they have done irreparable damage. Simple but adequate notes, bibliographies and collateral reading should fill an appendix in each volume.

A beginning has already been made in this direction. Various modern translations are now available. Moulton's "Readers' Bible" and Charles Foster Kent's "The Shorter Bible" mark a definite advance in the right direction. We have attempted here only delineation of principles. The details must be left to the scholars. If Protestantism wants to open the closed Bible there is no better way to begin. It is probably the only way.

Things That Cannot Be Shaken

By Charles F. Banning

And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain. Hebrews 12:27.

NEAR the end of the first century of our Christian era, an unnamed preacher faced a situation similar to the one we face. There was uncertainty everywhere—tremendous economic and social upheavals were on the way. Moral and spiritual ideals had grown dim, and government was corrupt and impotent. This unknown seer calmly announced, and we have his very words recorded in the book of Hebrews—that "the things which are being shaken are evidently the things that can be shaken. They are therefore temporal, man made and rather unimportant as time goes on. They are shaken and removed so that the things that cannot be shaken may remain."

There have been several such periods in history when the things that can be shaken have suffered earthquake. They were indeed trying times, and men wondered if anything would be left, or, if like Paul, they would escape with their lives on planks and broken pieces of the ship. The Middle Ages was such a time. The social system of that day, feudalism, crumbled and went to pieces. Great fortunes were destroyed; hundreds of lives were sacrificed. Today we can look back and see that the things that were shaken in those earlier times were things that should be shaken.

The Reformation represents another period of testing. The power of the church was broken; wars resulted, property was destroyed and many lives were ruthlessly sacrificed. Much wealth was confiscated, and it was a time that tried men's souls. The pessimists said that Christianity and civilization were doomed.

The latter part of the last century was a period of severe shaking. We had the slavery system; the wealth of thousands of families was invested in slaves. Many families were divided and our nation itself split over the slavery question. A terrible war was the result. Thousands of Negroes were ruined by the freedom which they did not know how to use. Our government was burdened with a debt from which we are still suffering.

The period from 1914 to 1918 was still another testing time. The ideals of truth and sincerity gave way to war propaganda. Our good will gave way to hate. Hysteria and coercion took the place of tolerance and freedom. No man dared to think for himself. Ten million lives and fifty billion dollars were wasted. We are still bearing that burden.

Now we are in the sixth year of another changing, testing time. Western civilization, capitalism, democracy, the church and the home are all being shaken severely. The cherished assumptions of our fathers, the things they would have died for are being questioned today. One of these is the validity of democracy. Some people are wondering if a good dictator is what we need, and perhaps kings will again have their day. What would our fathers have thought of that?

The gains and results of modern civilization are also being questioned. Our fathers boasted of our labor-saving machinery, the ease and speed of travel and the conquest of disease. Now we are asking, What profit is it if we invent machinery that causes men to starve; if we speed up travel and crush out the lives of fifty thousand citizens every year by our speed; if we save physical lives only to see moral and spiritual decay? Thousands of our college graduates, eager for pick-and-shovel jobs, are causing us to question the value of our particular type of higher education.

The reality of progress; the workability and utility of Christian ideals in industrial and international relations; in fact the very ability of man to build a better world is being questioned today. It is a day of earthquakes, and all these things are being shaken. Amid all the change and decay around us what is there that is unshaken?

Do you remember that story of the old Negro saint? Some years ago, when in a night of terror due to an unusual number of falling stars, many of the Negroes ran to this old man to ask him what to do. They found him sitting in the door of his cabin looking up at the stars, with a smile on his face. They were in terror, thinking the end of the world was at hand. He quietly pointed up to the sky and said: "Ain't it pretty? See them little stars shooing across the sky? But look at those big ones, they hain't moved an inch." I think we will find that it is the little things of life that are being shaken. Let me suggest four big things that have not moved an inch.

I

God still lives. We cannot say all is right with the world, neither will we say all is wrong. The things that are wrong are of man's doing. Many people have had their faith in God shaken by events of the past few years; however it was not a very firm faith nor was it a very good God that they believed in. An Oriental sat and listened attentively to an address given in one of our churches a few years ago. At the close of the address he was asked for his reaction. He remarked that it was very interesting, but not very helpful or encouraging to him, because he understood from the speaker's remarks that God must be a white man, an American and a Baptist. Unfortunately he was a yellow man, a Chinese and a Methodist. Our idea of that sort of God ought to be shaken. Our idea of a God who would starve women and children because we were at war with Germany, ought to be shaken. Our idea of a God who plays favorites with pious folk ought to be shaken.

Jesus told us that God was a loving Father. A father loves all his children. He said he was like a father who stood at the gate, waiting and watching for his prodigal boy, longing for him, ready to forgive him when he came to his senses. That kind of God still lives. He still waits for his prodigal children, he still grieves when they suffer; he still forgives when they repent and come home. He still answers when they call upon him.

Recently an outstanding minister of the past genera-

tion passed to his reward. One of the last statements that he made was this: "We shall not have a revival of religion in America until laymen begin to live as though there is a God."

II

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever —he is unshaken. Some are saying that we have outgrown him. No, we have not even caught up with him. We have not tried him and found him wanting. We have examined him and found him difficult. Every period of decline in Christian history has been one when men lost sight of Jesus. Every period of progress has been a time when man found some new phase of his matchless life and emphasized that.

CHARLES F. BANNING

Mary stood outside the tomb weeping. Why was she weeping? She had lost her Master and Lord—the one person who had treated her as a human being; who had understood and believed in her; had helped and encouraged her. In fact, he had redeemed her and saved her from a fate worse than death. Now she had lost him and she was weeping. Someone asked her, "Why are you weeping?" She answered, "They have taken away my Lord." Why is there so much sorrow, disappointment, worry, disillusionment and discouragement today? America, why weepest thou? If we were honest we would answer—"They have taken away my Lord."

We have substituted a pleasure philosophy of life, a pagan way of living, a theory of happiness based on eating, drinking and physical craving; we have dropped to a low animal plane of living and now we wonder why we do not have the higher joys and satisfaction of life.

My friends, I am old-fashioned enough to believe that we will never find happiness, that our home problems will never be solved, that good government will never come—yes, that the church will not prosper until we come back and "crown him Lord of all." There is no half-way mark with Jesus—you cannot accept him half way. Jesus is either Lord of all, or not at all, in a human life.

Jesus and his truth cannot be shaken. He is the cornerstone of progress. Sometime ago a man watched a surveyor starting his work. He seemed to waste so much time looking around, tapping the earth here and there, that finally the man asked, "What are you waiting for, why don't you get your instruments and get to work?" The surveyor answered, "We must first find a fixed point—a place to begin." That is what America needs. Some people seem to think that if we could put the republican party in power, adopt socialism, fascism or communism we would solve all our problems. No, we would be as bad off, or worse, in the long run than we are now. What we are in need of is a fixed point—a place to begin. Jesus is that point—he is the same yesterday, today and forever.

III

The power of good will has not been shaken. As a matter of fact the power of force, armaments and wealth has been badly shaken. When we review the last war we see that wars do not end wars or make the world safe for democracy. When we review our policy with Japan we see that the policy of the big stick, ill will and exclusion do not solve problems, but create new problems. When we review the Treaty of Versailles and see what has happened since, we see that retaliation and revenge are very poor substitutes for forgiveness and good will.

Let me give you an example from our own day. Some years ago we had a bitter theological quarrel. The one figure that stood out in that quarrel on one side was Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick. Never have more bitter attacks been made against a religious leader. He was despised, lied about, attacked and persecuted. Doctor Fosdick through the years has kept a sweet, Christlike spirit—never once has he attacked anyone. Never once has he resorted to bitterness. Never once has he answered a critic. What is the result? Whether we agree with all that he thinks is beside the point. His spirit has conquered. His critics have slipped back into obscurity and Harry Emerson Fosdick stands out as the most influential Protestant in America today. Love never fails, said Paul. Those who resorted to hate and bitterness did fail.

In industry it is public opinion that wins or loses a strike every time. The cause may be just and the demands of the men may be reasonable, but if their spirit is wrong, if hate and bitterness enter in, they lose their cause.

Why are we arming against Japan, a nation three thousand miles away—and yet here is Canada at our borders and we have no fortifications there whatever? Simply because our "jingoists" and munition makers have been able to create a spirit of ill will between Japan and America—and there is a spirit of good will between Canada and America. Love never fails; love

is patient and kind; love knows no jealousy; love is never rude, selfish or resentful, but is always eager to believe the best; always patient, hopeful and kind.

IV

The spirit of service is another unshakable. The conflict in industry today is largely between profits and service. It is the age-long clash between personal and property rights. Which comes first, a living wage for the workers, low prices for the consumers, or profits for the owners? That is the vital question in industry today. From the story of Cain and Abel down to the present hour the world's suffering has come from the misuse of power, or the wrong motive. Sometimes it has been physical power as exerted by the Indians against the early settlers; sometimes financial power as exhibited by the large corporations squeezing out the small merchant; sometimes political power as expressed in the spoils system, which has through the years been a great octopus attacking the very life of our government.

Jesus was alone in the desert; he had been thinking through his mission, his message and his work. He had been communing with his Heavenly Father. So busy and preoccupied was he that he forgot his own needs. Then came his temptation, "Use your power for your own good—change stones to bread, organize an army and make yourself ruler of the world." You know his answer, because you know his motive.

I have a young friend who is foreman in a leather factory. He has thirty men under him. About a year ago he was given a raise. Four months later his employers called him in and praised him highly and offered him another raise. He asked if the men under him were to be given a raise also. "No," was the answer, "they will not quit; if they do quit we can get plenty of other men." He shook his head and said, "My men need and deserve the next raise. I will not take a raise until they get one." "Don't be a fool," his employers shouted at him. "I am not," he answered quietly, "I am just trying to be a Christian." When that spirit, that motive gets into industry and grips both employer and employes, then you will see industry revolutionized —you will not see it until then. Force will not do it, that has failed; laws will not do it; economic pressure will not do it; the old law of supply and demand is very important, but it will not by itself solve the problem. When men are willing to take a reasonable profit and pass on the rest in service to others, then progress will come.

The old Negro said, "the big stars have not moved an inch." God is in his heaven; Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever; love never fails. The Christ who said, "follow me," was one who came not to be ministered unto but to give his life for others.

These are the things that cannot be shaken.

THERE is one motto, on which great mean of science and great men of faith would agree, that might well be hung upon the wall of every church and of every college classroom: "The more we know about the universe, the more mysterious it is."

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK.

The Inefficiency of Our Efficiency

BY HARRISON RAY ANDERSON

Now therefore thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little. Haggai 1:5 and 6a.

WE met them as we were coming out after two wonderful weeks of fishing in the High Sierras. Endeavoring to forget the war and enter life again we had packed into what was then almost virgin fishing country. These fellow fishermen were going in where we had been and we were giving them what information we had. They were business men, millionaires, from St. Louis. Worn out with life, they had traveled all the way west to the California mountains for rest. They wanted to get away from everything that even suggested business, they said. They showed us their pack train. "What is in that pack?" I asked. "O that," one of them replied, "is a radio we are taking with us." "Oh, I see," I said, "you are to listen to the market in the *tips* of the Sierras." Scientific efficiency as it was found in the radio was undoing the very thing they were seeking to accomplish. They had traveled thousands of miles by automobile to get away from their business, only to drag it after them on an extra mule.

Compare the different attitude found in a letter from Victor F. Lawson written on a trip away up the Nile. Charles H. Dennis records it in his splendid book "Victor Lawson, His Time and His Work." The letter stated that it took almost a month for mail to reach them, that they were at Wady Halfa "near to being out of the world." Then Mr. Lawson added truly, "But that is what we came here for."

Another illustration: An enthusiastic salesman had sold a business man the very latest equipment in the way of a filing system. Later the salesman returned and was visiting his customer. "I have nothing more to sell you," he said, "you have the very latest thing on the market; there is none better." The customer then told how pleased they were with the wonderful system. "By the way," the salesman said, as he was leaving, "how's business?" "Business?" replied the merchant, "we haven't any, we are all taking care of the filing system." Efficiency had made them inefficient.

I

Now our text takes us away from the city and speaks to us in terms of agriculture. "Ye have sown much; ye bring in little." The Bible is never very far removed from the soil. Flocks and shepherds wind across its pages continually and the sower goes forth to sow and the reaper follows in many a book. Every one of us should be interested in the situation which confronts America today on her farms. Surely those of us who live in the city ought to be able to qualify as authorities on this question—we know so very little about it. Experts, you know, are men far removed from their neighbors. A little while ago our agricultural experts advised that prosperity would come through destruction of our

plenty. Our efficiency in producing so much had made us inefficient. The way out was to destroy our surplus. So crops were plowed under and burned, and excess animals were bought and killed and thrown away to rot. I saw that stream of waste one day as it passed through our packing plants. Still at the very time we were doing this there were people in our cities who could not afford to buy meat and who were hungry and starving. This was the situation at home while abroad there were the hungry starving millions. Some of us think of this old Book as antiquated, and who of our experts would turn to it for counsel on such subjects? Yet here in it I find an ancient story of a situation of seven years of plenty and of a people who wisely stored for the years of famine that followed. We did not do that.

Our experts tell us that our problem now is not one of plenty at all. The situation we really face in rural America, they say, is one in which the soil has been so continually cropped and washed out that there are millions of acres no longer productive and other millions which are rapidly approaching that condition. They tell us that unless the process of ruining the soil ceases we will face the very opposite of plenty. This is what a generation without a wise love for the soil has done in its so-called efficiency. From such a story of rural robbery we turn again to this wise Book. In it I find that every seventh year Israel had to allow her ground to lie unfarmed. The soil rested and nourished itself that year and, as a result of it, remained productive. We have been too efficient for that. In order to get it all we have destroyed the soil for the generations that are to follow.

But the whole situation which confronts us, not only in agriculture but in all areas of life, is better set forth in the ancient law of the gleaner. No farmer, according to this principle, was to harvest all his crop. He was to leave something in the corners and along the edges for the poor. And notice this: those who were poor could then come, and, if they were willing to work, could live and not starve. There was something for them to do and there was something for them to eat. How far we have come from that in our modern life! No trained farmer runs his farm like that, and, if a business man even suspected that any of his workers were doing that thing, he would dismiss them in a minute.

Well and good, and the Bible will not stand for a program of waste; but what have we come to in modern life? Why, we have built a system which is so efficient that some are glutted and cannot sell and thereby live; and others are empty and unemployed and have nothing with which to buy, and therefore starve. Ten million walk our city streets or country lanes and each one of them is a rebuke to our so-called efficiency. In an ancient day Ruth and her relatives found themselves where so many have found themselves today. Death created a situation that plunged them into need. They were strangers in a foreign land and alone. They went back, however, to the old home land of Naomi. There, in the field of Boaz, they gleaned and were enabled to live until a more prosperous day came for them all. Read that lovely, jeweled book again from that point of view and see if it does not have new meaning for you. Somehow we must rebuild our modern system of life until it will help all people, all classes and all nations, to live. The ways of God must come to earth again and we must be efficient enough to find and follow them. Our present efficiency is too inefficient.

II

How is it in the business world? What has efficiency done to us? Here is my friend—a composite friend, portions of whom I see in many places. I go to talk with him about God and a Christian world and his obligation and privilege in the Christian fellowship of the church. He frankly tells me he has no time for that. God has gone out of his life and a Christian world is the preachers' business—and he wishes, by the way, that they would attend to it and leave him alone. So we talk about his business. "Say," he says, "she's doing fine. We're working twenty-four hours a day and even on Sunday. We give 'em quick service and we're on top and winning." I believe he believes it. He is sincere and successful. He is still young and at the top and, what is more, he is making work for a lot of men. All around him whirls the modern efficient business. A roomful of girls chew gum as fast as they drive their typewriters. A boy dashes into our conference with a paper that must be signed immediately to clinch an order that will not wait a five minute call. Outside the door a man paces back and forth looking angrily at me and wondering when I will go. A partner in the adjoining office takes the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in vain three times in a few minutes' conversation on the telephone, but he gets his order. He gets the order, Christ or no Christ. There is no Sabbath here. There is no reverence for life or its deeper or holier side.

The out-of-doors? Foolish idea! He goes to the gym for thirty minutes a week. Home? See that table! He spends many a night sleeping there—with his clothes on—to make his business a success. I respect such sacrifice. I admire the man who is willing to do that for any cause. His energy surrendered to God would wake up many a sleepy group of Christians and start them on their way again. But he has lost his way in a maze of efficiency. "You work eighteen hours a day," I say. Then I tell him of my friend with a dear wife and a sweet child. He has not been able to work any, I say. I talk to him about his home; about the faith that held his mother in the hour of her deep need; about a world that will die without God and his gospel. I tell him of the men, like himself, broken and dead—or worse, nervously wrecked and in institutions for the rest of their lives. All of this must be done in a hurried tone because I am wasting his valuable time. I look deep into his eyes. They are old already and he is worn and breaking. I tell him of God and how he can hold men up, but there is a far-away look; and now I must go. His time for me is up. Then, as I go, I remember an old Book which I am sure he would never feel has a word for him, yet which says to all men, ancient and modern, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." Clustered around that ancient word I see God, the

church, home, rest, brotherly kindness. I hear a bird sing and a child laugh, and I learn of a boy finding his way again because a busy man has taken time to befriend him. My friend has missed them all. He is a success!

Then another word comes—a word from God: "What shall it profit—*profit*—a man if he gain—*gain*—the whole world and lose—*lose*—his own life—*his soul?*"

One of these days we will be honest enough to ask ourselves a deeper question about the moral and social foundation of our whole business life. Much of it is good; some of it is silly and needs changing. God needs to sit at the directors' table, and his Word and its eternal principles must become our way and will.

III

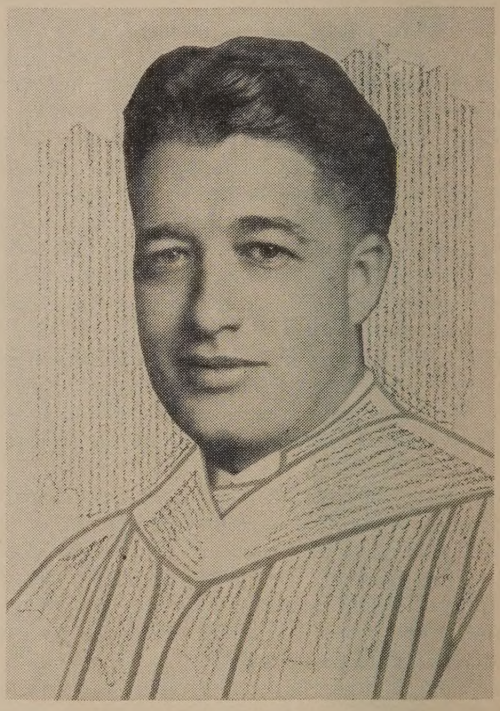
When we look honestly at our ways of seeking to settle international trouble through war, we see another example of the inefficiency of our efficiency. Think of the number of men who this day go forth to sow the seeds of hate and strife. How many they are compared with the handful of peacemakers. Think of our so-called "peace-time" war budgets. What is the result? Here stands a glorious cathedral. It has taken years of human thought and toil to construct it. Miles away, an efficiently trained enemy gunner is at work seeking to locate it on his map. He calls to his help his higher mathematics and he uses all the equipment which science has furnished him. Now he has bracketed it on his map. Now he adjusts his sights. Now, at an object which he has never seen, he fires his long range rifle and with a hissing roar the cathedral falls on the kneeling worshipers below. The shattered stained glass is red with a new color—blood red. Behold our efficiency!

T. E. Lawrence, that English genius for organizing strange men and tribes, wrote a wonderful account of the way he rallied the eastern tribes to the allied cause. It is a story for patient readers. The title of the book, however, is beyond my imagination, for it is "The Seven Pillars of Wisdom." In my judgment it should be entitled "A Perfect Display of Folly." It sets forth the awful brutality of men as they rape and burn and kill, through the war years, with a fiendish abandon. With what result? Why, a world bankrupt! yet voting greater military budgets. Millions dead! yet hurried plans for more efficient killing. A bonus to be paid from money that is not in sight, while new wars are planned. Some day we will discover not only the badness of it all but the waste and the childishness of it all. We will or our military efficiency will drive us mad as it did the modern father of it—Nietzsche. We need to sow a different kind of crop among the nations.

IV

We think of Lincoln and his school, Washington and his training. Well, compare the equipment with which our young moderns are surrounded for educational purposes. Think of all that passes before you in the name of modern efficiency in education from preschooling to postgraduate days. We have done a good deal of sowing here. Are the results pleasing or plentiful? Here in a city is a great group of young people gathered together in an institution for training. It is our modern university. Across on the other side of the city is an equally large number and they, too, for the most part, are young. It is our penitentiary with its ever increasing numbers. Many leave our schools better trained for a life that leads straight to the jail. What folly is it that encourages us to spend money taking ordinary crooks and making educated criminals out of them? Yet there are schools in America endowed with Presbyterian money whose faculty will tell you frankly that they are not there to make *good* men out of their students but only *informed* men.

Here we are with all our learning, yet behind it all stands an old and forgotten Word that now, in our educational frustration, we might hear again: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." "Thou shalt not kill—not steal—not [in spite of all the new morality] commit adultery." "Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love. Follow after love." The simple yet profound truths of God and his Word must come back into our inefficient educational efficiency.



HARRISON RAY ANDERSON

V

Now we are where we have been trying to get to all through this sermon. It, after all, is the most important part for you and me who have named the Blessed Name. We have thought of farm, of school, of business, and of nation; but what of the church of the living God? It, according to its founder, is to be leaven and to change the world; to be light and to overcome the

darkness; to be love and to be stronger than hate. Christians are to be witnesses to Jesus Christ as their Savior and are to give their life blood, if need be, that his kingdom may have its way on the earth.

Let me say it so that it will not be misunderstood: We are at present confronted with the pitiful inefficiency of a great deal of our efficient Christian effort. We are like the glass model engine. It was just like the real one in appearance except that it had no power. It could not pull the hat off its designer's head. It was just to be seen. Are we to be seen on Sunday and to be found with no pulling power for Christ on Monday morning or Saturday night? What are all our services and conferences and methods really accomplishing in winning a needy world to Christ and saving it from modern barbarism?

How is it with you, my brother? Our Master asked us to bear fruit; yes more, to bear much fruit—to be that efficient for him. Are lives being redeemed because of you and me? Do men see Christ in us and want to be like him, or do we repel men and drive them away from Christ? Here comes the heart of it all for us as Christians: "Apart from me, ye can do nothing."

Are you discouraged, now? Well, it is a good thing for a man who has taken the wrong road to find it out. It is a good thing for a person who feels that he is inefficiently doing his work to have a gentle hint that he had better change before the final auditor comes and it is too late. Haggai, who gave us our text, has been called the prophet not of failure but of success. He visioned a great new day for God's people. He outlined the way for his day and ours. Life which had become self-centered had to become God-centered. Men had to put God first in all their ways. It means for us the rebuilding of the temple of our souls and the temple of our world on the plan of God. One who, in his efficiency, sought to destroy the church of God and came to naught save weakened blindness on a noonday road, came to see, in spite of human weakness which he always carried, that he, Paul, could do all things through Christ who strengthened him.

This is our answer. Only through him, on the farm, in the shop, in the school, in the world, in the human heart, and in the church of Christ; only through him—the Way, and the Truth, and the Life—*Jesus*.

A Christian Social Order

I sometimes think that candidates for the Christian fellowship should be confronted, not at first with intellectual orthodoxy, but with this one testing demand: "Can you, dare you, attempt the way of One, the ideal Man, who as he died prayed that those who had killed him might be forgiven and pleaded that they were really ignorant of what they did?" Can you possibly, as a professing Christian, dare to take up that attitude to the world? If a candidate can pass that test, and declare that in so far as God will give him strength and grace he will adventure through life in that spirit, he is then to be admitted at once as a young Christian disciple who quite soon will lose a great deal of caste with his friends, but who is in the tradition of the Master whom he desires to follow. H. R. L. Sheppard.

What Is Important to You?

By Allan Knight Chalmers

Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up. John 2:19.
. . . if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy. Psalm 137:6.

I ASK you: Why do you support the church? What is your reason for believing that missions must be maintained? Why do you want others to take the name of Christ and become members of the church? What in religion is really important to you?

We are often sidetracked from the main point by loyalties good enough in themselves, yet in a way so good that they keep us from the best. Jesus faced that, as the record shows us. The people of that day, who were moved by the tug of religion, loved their church. They were really and rightly proud of it. "It took us forty and six years to build it—this church of ours," they said. "How do you like it?"

And Jesus said, "Do you love God?"

Now don't say that he said no such thing. Of course it is not in the written text that way. But he said it, just the same. He was always saying it. Every move he made said it. The things that made him mad said it. (That *is* in the text.) The things that made him cry said it. His whole life said it. "Do you love God?"

THEY WERE GOOD PEOPLE

It was probably when the lovers of the Temple, those who were always harking back to its ancient glory, were most vocal about "The Temple," that Jesus said the words which finally gave his opponents their technical chance to accuse him.

It was a saying which was admittedly not understood by those who heard it; was interpreted differently by the same sort of people. Mark reports it one way, John another, not only in their own understanding of it, but in their interpretation of others' misunderstanding. One of the accounts implies that Jesus said that he was intending to destroy the Temple just to prove that he could build it up in three days. The other account insinuates that Jesus said that probably someone would destroy the Temple, but that didn't make any difference. *He* was the important thing—not "The Temple."

Some called it arrogance and others called it blasphemy, which was the technical charge against him. And all the time he was trying to make them see that the Temple was not an end in itself; that it was there to serve God and, though destroyed by some chance it might be, its reason for existence could not be defeated.

Jesus by the words of our first text was trying to make good people realize that they had missed the important thing.

Our second text is revelatory of this constant need man has of putting first things first. Let me read a few verses of it:

> By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.
For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.
How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?
If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.
If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

What is important to you?

Dean Inge wrote in his "Personal Religion and the Life of Devotion" that "we are what we care about and think upon and love." Let us state that thought in another way: What a man is, is revealed by the things that disturb him.

MAN'S CENTER OF CONCERN

The answer to our topic can be found here. Find out what disturbs you and you will find out what is important to you. What do you react against? What has the power of making you move? (Move *toward* primarily.) A man is revealed by the things that disturb him.

We should say here, just to have the record clear, that a man is revealed also by the things that do not disturb him. Wilberforce, faced with the pleas of those who were disturbed by the slavery of black men in the British empire, records his feelings at the time: "I knew, but was not haunted by conditions." That said something about Wilberforce.

The classic story of Thomas Carlyle and Titian is another example. A group of the immortals were gathered in the Royal Academy and the discussion turned to the painting of Titian. One man spoke of the fact which impressed him, that Titian's sense of form was so sure. Another spoke of the fact of his unusual feeling for color. And Carlyle, listening, bored, finally broke in, "And here sits a man made in the image of God, who knows nothing about Titian, and cares nothing about Titian, and there's another fact about Titian." But one of the men leaned forward and said: "Pardon me, that is not a fact about Titian. It is a fact, a lamentable fact, about Thomas Carlyle."

You and I, as individuals, and the Christian church, as an institution, are tragically revealed today by the things that do not disturb us. But it is the things that do disturb us which interest me most. We are making progress in these things.

When a man tells me, for example, that the world is right where it was before the last war in its psychology, I know that he does not have a good memory. With the concern articulate and articulated which we have today in this country, at least, there is no question that the Christian conscience will have its incarnation in the lives of men in that war which everybody assumes will come, but which will be, nevertheless, a shock to us when it really does arrive.

We may not win—yet—in this witness for peace and its achievement. Who can tell that? We may win, in spite of everything. But win or not, we cannot make our peace with war. Whatever happens, this at least is conceded in the church circles in which we move: Few Christian people can go to war in these days without being disturbed in their minds and hearts about how essentially—how basically—unchristian is this thing they do.

But in other areas our Christian conscience is not as clear cut. Do you remember a prophecy I made about a year ago that churches were going to be more split up in these coming days on the political issue than they would be on the idea of God? There is a "ganging up" (or shall we use the revised phrasing, a "getting together") of business men—of influential church business men—to let nothing stand in the way of their right to do what they please with that power over existence for millions which they hold in their hands. All this in the sacred name of Liberty.

I am not putting up this issue. It is there in the things which disturb you. Ask yourself what causes you to feel.

TWO GREAT DANGERS

We can analyze our own emotions by looking at two of the world's great dangers.

Belief in God is in danger. In the hearts of a million men that flame is flickering. "How can we believe in God in such a world?" they cry. In the minds of millions more that gusty doubt is blowing. Belief in God is in danger.

Listen!—you—and you—and you. God, for many people weaker than yourself, depends on you. You must make them see God. They cannot believe. They are too weak, too sick with the long delay of hope. You must make them believe in God by the way they see you live. Does that stir you so that you feel like clapping as does the audience in Peter Pan when Tinker Bell is dying because nobody believes in the existence of a fairy? "You do believe," cries Wendy. "Oh, show Tinker Bell you do believe!" and the audience breaks out into clapping.

Well, I'm not fooling. God needs his witnesses today. Belief in God is in danger.

There is another crisis. Let's be realists. This is not fooling either. Profits are in danger. Your money—and mine. Endowment for this church is in danger—and for hospitals and colleges. Those things we add to take the edge off of self-concern. But primarily your money. It will hurt your profits to seek peace for the world—to serve justice—to express love. Not only millions of men, but millions in money are in the balance these days.

ONE LIFE, NOT TWO

In the face of these dangers, you have one life. Not two!—oh, be realists, not two. Not a Sunday life and a week-day life. We can get away with that no longer. You have one life. What are you going to do with that life in these crisis days?

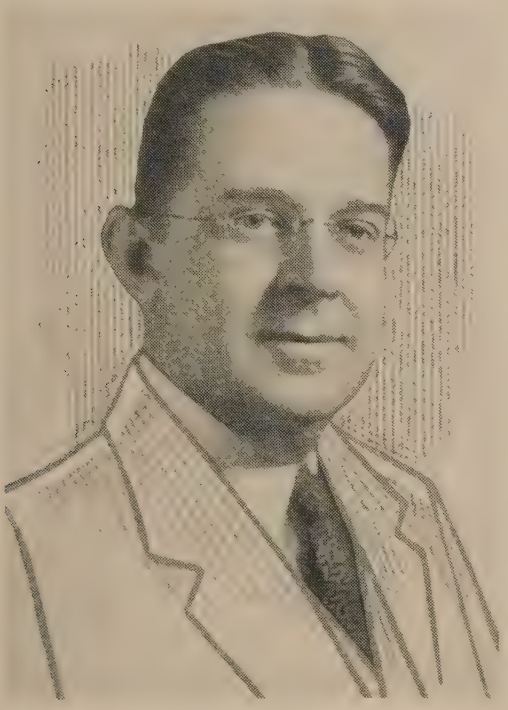
In many churces today men are disturbed about a danger. If you can be sure of saving only one—belief in God or your profits—which will you try to save? This is a part of the meaning of "What is Important to You?"

But for our thinking this morning this is the easy contrast to see: God and Mammon. Jesus said it clearly—you cannot serve them both. The ancient Jews in their

bondage in Babylon said it with weeping and with witness: "To be joyful here is to sin against God. It would be safer for us and more comfortable for us but the Holy City will not be restored if we forget her. We must prefer her above our chief joy."

Out of a spiritual sensitiveness aroused by this choice of crises into which you must decide to throw your life, I ask those, who in this first choice would choose to serve God, another question out of our main topic: "Why should one support missions?"

When you hear a person say, "I do not believe in missions," he may mean one of two things. It may be that quite rightly he does not approve of the way in which mission work is carried on, and perhaps he is unable to



Allan Knight Chalmers

find any practical channel through which can flow his own convictions about the way Christianity should be presented to others. To have the missionary representative of an American Board of a Dutch Reformed church try to persuade Chinese Confucianists to accept a Scotch Presbyterian fundamentalism as their only chance to escape the wrath of an ancient Jewish God deserves no support from us.

It is even conceivable that some people might feel that Henry McDowell, an American Negro, should not go to Africa and spend his life supported by our dollars in making villages sanitary, natives able to read, crops quadrupled in harvest, hospitals available for sick people, and other such bases for the abundant life, practical. To some people this may not seem (although I believe it is) the proper work for a missionary. People have said that this is secular work, not religious.

The man trying to follow Christ may conceivably know of no way to support his idea of missions, even as times come when, by no possible vote in some specific election, can a citizen express his idea of proper government. A man may mean all this when he says, "I do not believe in missions." But if he means that he does not believe that we should send out those who believe as we do, to tell others by word and deed what we believe, wanting them to believe it too, then something is wrong with his idea of religion.

When a man has discovered nothing important enough to make him want others to know about it too, and to feel it as he does, his religion is not very valuable even to himself.

WHY SUPPORT MISSIONS?

It is because it is important to have you know why you do support, or do not support, our church's missionary projects that I am putting my missionary appeal to you in the setting of this question which forms our topic and the background of the general principle which we have so far considered. Why should we support missions?

We can make it concrete, as Jesus would, by taking the missionary project which is closest in sentiment to our hearts: the work of the Martins in Jefferson Academy. Do you support that work, loyally as you do, because it bears the name of Dr. Jefferson? No question is in our minds about our desire to honor him. We do not want the Charles E. Jefferson Academy to fail. But what I seek to have you discover for yourself is what is important to you.

Unless you have discovered something in religion which is so important to you that you do not feel right unless you find opportunity to share it with others, missionary support is not an adequate foundation. A part of the reason why so many churches have failed to support missions during the depression is because they had no foundational idea of why they had been supporting them all these years.

Religion is an element in life which makes it different from what it otherwise would have been. It is what keeps you from being conformed to this world but instead transforms you by the renewing idea so that you know "what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

As long as there are men and women like the Martins and Henry McDowell and a whole host of living witnesses who are eager to carry the transforming idea throughout the world, we are revealing our own inadequate understanding of what religion means to us if we do not consider their lives and work integral with our own. The work of missions is not an adjunct to the Christian church. It is the inevitable consequence of the passion of Christ's spirit, and whenever we lose belief in missions as an idea and an obligation, we should search our own hearts and discover where an important element in our own religious life has gone.

You may say, if you like—and you are probably right—that this is a queer sort of missionary sermon: that I have quoted no figures and appealed to no sentimental service for others; that there has been no talk of conversion, nor exhibits of important work accomplished. And if in order to be a sermon on missions those things are essential, then this is not a sermon on missions. But if those who go for us do not themselves

know that important thing that Christianity tells, they do not deserve our support; and if we who send them do not know for ourselves something which makes us want them to go for us, any support we give will be but fair weather promises.

This is not a fair weather world. I cannot preach to you a gospel of easy comfort. It is a gospel of profound faith that in the way of Jesus there is no bondage—there is no tyranny—that can keep us captive; that there is no cross which can bar us from The Way.

A GAME OF TRUTH

A recent incident gives summation to this whole emphasis. In speaking before the Pilgrim Players Dramatic Club this week on "The Theater—A Hall of Mirrors," I desired to illustrate a point by the use of Levy's play of a few years back called "The Devil Passes." I had seen the play and was much stimulated by its central idea. On looking up the play I was amused to discover that the Lord Chancellor in England, who censors plays, had refused to allow it to be put on in London on the ground that it was indecent. He, you see, was disturbed by something in the play which I did not catch at all—which says something about the Lord Chancellor—and about me.

The point of the play is that the devil, appearing in the form of a young English curate, Nicholas Lucy—a good touch—was only demonstrating to people, by offering them opportunity to do the selfish thing they thought they wanted, that they really wanted to serve God. After the usual preliminaries of a play the central theme is set before us with the game of "Truth" which they play, and the curate's question which each person must answer truthfully:

"What is your innermost heart's desire?" or by implication, he goes on, "What do you believe?"

"Let me ask it this way," he finishes, "If you had to sacrifice all your aspirations, which would you sacrifice last?"

The artist says he wants to paint a famous picture. The actress cares nothing for the future but wants to win a present applause by acting a famous part (which she could get if only she could break her contract). The author says he wants to write one thing which will make all his work be thought important. The girl wants romantic but selfish love. Old Magnus wants to be comfortable.

All these things the curate makes possible for them, only to have each one discover that he or she, surprised, finds that each one wants above all to serve God more. "You think you care most about yourselves," the devil says, "but I find I have no complete successes. When put to the test there is something beyond yourself more important to you."

I would stake my life that even the meanest of you will not save yourself in the end. I have staked everything in which I believe on some of you. There is something in life which everyone of us prefers above our chief joy and it is this preference which makes the church secure.

If only you can have imagination enough to see the choice clearly, not one of you would in the end betray God. To know this about the Way of Christ is to find the dynamic for modern missions.

Then Gamaliel Stood Up

By Stanley I. Stuber

But a Pharisee in the Sanhedrin called Gamaliel, a doctor of the Law who was highly respected by all the people, got up . . . and said . . . Acts 6:34.

TODAY we are to consider a passage from the book of Acts which is full of human feeling and, in a most dramatic manner, pictures for us the trials and the dangers and the opposition which the early disciples of Jesus had to pass through. I refer to the account of the apostles' imprisonment at the hands of Annas and his allies the Sadducees, their escape from prison, and their trial before the Sanhedrin.

I

With great power and enthusiasm the apostles had, since Pentecost, been doing wondrous works. Thousands were being converted to the new Way. Many were healed of their diseases. People with unclean spirits were cleansed. The interest in this new religion grew to such bounds that "crowds gathered even from the towns around Jerusalem" that they might see and receive healing from Peter and his wonder workers.

Now all this filled the high priest of the Jews, Annas, and his allies the Sadducees, with bitter jealousy. In their anger they put the apostles in the public prison, but in some mysterious way they were set free. Being found again in the temple teaching the people about Jesus they were brought back to face a hearing before the Sanhedrin.

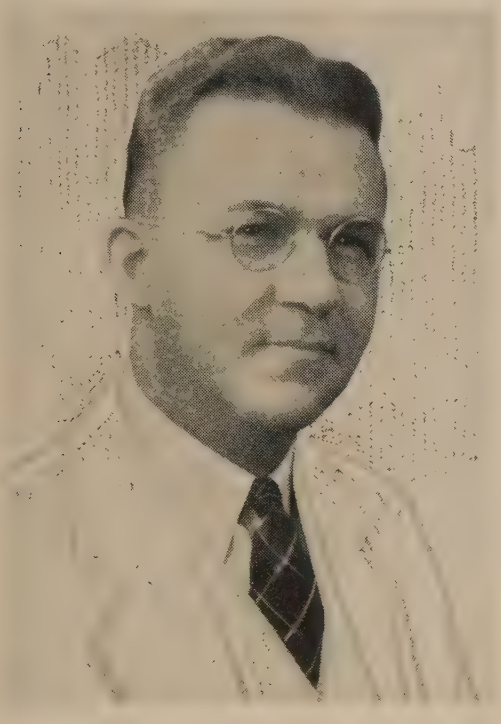
"Did we not strictly forbid you to teach about this Name?" said the high priest. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine!" Peter and the apostles then replied, "One must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised Jesus whom you murdered by hanging him on a gibbet. God lifted him up to his right hand as our pioneer and savior, in order to grant repentance and remission of sins to Israel. To these facts we bear witness, with the Holy Spirit which God has given to those who obey him."

When the high priest and the Sadducees heard this they became so furious that they determined to kill the apostles at once. Blind with jealousy, mad with anger, zealous with dogmatic religion, they, for the moment, became as beasts. Sympathy, tolerance, love they knew not; all they knew was that these apostles before them were enemies of their own cause. The only action they could consider was that of killing. At this moment death stared the apostles in the face. The Christian movement was about at an end.

"Then Gamaliel stood up!" Gamaliel, a Pharisee, a doctor of the Law, a man respected by all the people, stood up and faced a wild and disorderly and sinister Sanhedrin. Gamaliel was calm; he had reasoned the thing through. With great dignity, with the assurance of a man who knows what he is talking about, he reminded his colleagues of many movements and rebellions which had arisen in Israel. They had all come to naught. "So I advise you today," he said, "to leave these men to themselves. Let them alone. If this proj-

ect or enterprise springs from men, it will collapse; whereas, if it springs from God, you will be unable to put them down. You may even find yourselves fighting God!"

Then we find in the record these remarkable words: "They gave in to him." How much meaning there is in those few simple words! Gamaliel had saved the lives of the apostles. He had saved the early church. He may even have saved the whole Christian movement. It is not strange that one man can calm a mad mob. It has been done again and again. Jesus had not only stilled the waves, but he had walked unharmed through a rebellious people. Missionaries have been



Stanley I. Stuber

known to quiet a savage people with a song or a prayer. Great orators often are able to sway great audiences just as they please. So Gamaliel, with his earnestness, with his reason, with his high purpose, turned blackness into light, for he let the sunshine in upon hearts filled with malice, jealousy and blindness.

II

"Then Gamaliel stood up!" How can we account for it? Was he not a Jew? Was he not a Pharisee? Was he not a member of the Sanhedrin? Yes he was, but he had a mind and a heart of his own. He was no rubber-stamp. He did not always go the way of the crowd. He did what he thought to be right, whether he stood with the crowd, or stood alone.

Let us not think that Gamaliel stood up by accident. It was not by chance that he followed the policy he did. It was his habit to do such a thing. His whole life was one of consideration for other people, one of justice, one of service and good will. He lived such a wonderful life that years after he died a historian wrote: "With the death of Gamaliel the reverence for the divine law ceased, and the observance of purity and abstinence departed."

No, it was not by chance that this great teacher of the Jews, this Pharisee, defended the Christians. He had it in him! His blood, to a large degree, determined the course which he took. His environment, his ancestors, his entire spiritual background were behind that wonderful spirit and speech of his.

Gamaliel was respected by all the people not only for his kindness and wisdom, but also for his inheritance. He was of the house of David, and therefore must have been related by blood to Jesus. His grandfather was Israel's greatest teacher, Hillel. Hillel had been given the high honor of "Prince" of the Pharisees. He was elected head of the Sanhedrin. His teachings founded the liberal school of the Pharisees, a school which Jesus surely could not possibly have condemned. Hillel was known to have enjoined and to have practiced the virtues of charity, humility, patience and true piety.

Gamaliel's father was also a famous and a righteous person. His name was Simeon. It is believed that the Simeon to whom Luke refers (Luke 2:25-33) was Gamaliel's father. Luke writes: "Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, an upright and devout man, who was on the outlook for the consolation of Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him; indeed it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he was not to see death before he had seen the Lord messiah. By an inspiration of the Spirit he came to the temple, and when the parents of the child Jesus carried him in to perform the customary regulations of the Law for him, then Simeon took him in his arms, blessed God, and said, 'Now, Master, thou canst let thy servant go, and go in peace, as thou didst promise; for mine eyes have seen thy saving power which thou hast prepared before the face of all the peoples, to be a light of revelation for the Gentiles and a glory to thy people Israel.'"

Is it any wonder that Gamaliel was a great man, having such a father and grandfather? Here were at least three *good* Pharisees! We cannot believe that Jesus' condemnations were directed at the followers of Hillel, but rather to that larger division of the Pharisees who were followers of Shammai. They, surely, were open to the charge of formalism and hypocrisy, and they were the dominant party during Jesus' time. Jesus rightly condemned such haughty Pharisees, but for such humble and sincere religious leaders as Hillel, Simeon and Gamaliel he could have had nothing but respect and admiration. They wanted to make religion a real thing in the lives of the people, and they gave a liberal interpretation to the Law. Moreover, they were good people, spiritually minded and peace loving. In many respects Jesus, it might be said, belonged to this progressive and wholesome, but small, division of the Pharisees.

Gamaliel had great ancestors, but he was a great man on his own right. With a great school of a thousand pupils (Paul was one of them), with a distinct leaning toward Greek thought, with a keen admiration and

friendship for the great Jewish philosopher Philo, who developed the Logos idea which we find in John's Gospel, Gamaliel stood out as a teacher of liberal thought and as a man widely known for his wisdom, prudence and spiritual nature. He laid down laws that the poor heathen (Gentiles) should have the same rights as the poor Jews in gathering the gleanings after harvest. In other words, he rose above racial prejudice; he was humane. He also instructed that the Jews on meeting the heathen (Gentiles) should extend to them the customary greeting, "Peace be with you." That is, he was not a proud hypocrite, but a friendly sort of person. He also created certain laws which protected wives against unprincipled husbands, and widows against unscrupulous children. In all this he was walking in the same direction, and in the same spirit, as Jesus.

There is a tradition that Gamaliel was baptized by Peter and Paul, and became a Christian, but this is refuted by the best authorities. But whether or not he became a formal Christian does not matter a great deal; for he was, without doubt, of the same mind and purpose as Jesus. Like our Master he dared to stand up for the right, no matter how great the opposition might be. Like our Master he loved peace and his God and his fellow men.

III

"Then Gamaliel stood up!" It was a great thing to do. It took a lot of manhood and courage and conviction. Yet it was the thing to do and somebody had to do it. It would almost seem that God raises up great people in every crisis in history who are brave and strong enough to stand up for the right against the forces of wrong. We see such a man in Moses, in Abraham, in Joshua and Caleb. All of these great leaders had the courage of their convictions; they dared to do and say what they believed to be the right. So it was with Amos and all the prophets. Amos dared to proclaim the cold truth even at the king's banquet; Jeremiah dared to stand for God all alone.

The New Testament also contains notable examples of bravery in the cause of righteousness. Jesus had his Gethsemane and Paul his Roman prison. Stephen felt the stones upon his head and Peter was crucified upside-down. The early disciples of the first and second centuries knew what it meant to stand up for Christ in the face of the Roman empire.

Savonarola cried out against evil as one who commanded the housetops; John Huss would not compromise, he would not recant, he would be burnt alive first. And he was!

Luther, at the Diet of Worms, stood up for spiritual freedom and the inward religious attitude. When forced to yield his views he said, "Unless I am refuted by Scriptural testimonies or by clear arguments—for I believe neither the pope nor the councils alone, since it is clear that they have often erred and contradicted one another—I am conquered by the passages of Scripture which I have cited, and my conscience is bound in the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is unsafe and dangerous to act against conscience. *Here I stand. I can do no other. So help me God!*" This is the stuff out of which the Protestant Reformation was made!

Castellio raising his voice against Calvin when he condemned Servetus to burn; Erasmus standing for the ethical religion of Jesus when all about him was moral rottenness; John Knox criticizing Mary Queen of Scots to her very face: this is the way social and moral and religious progress is made. I am always deeply moved whenever I read the story of the English Reformation. There hundreds went to the stake because they stood by their principles. When the two bishops, Latimer and Ridley, came to their stakes at Smithfield, they embraced each other, kissed the stakes and offered earnest prayers. Then Ridley said to Latimer: "Be of good heart, brother, for God will either assuage the fury of the flame, or enable us to abide it." And Latimer replied: "Be of good cheer, Master Ridley, and play the man; for us shall this day light such a candle in England, as I trust, by God's grace, shall never be put out." And they did!

Voltaire standing up for truth and justice and tolerance; Wesley standing up for evangelical Christianity; Roger Williams standing up for religious liberty; John Brown, Wilberforce and Lincoln standing for the freedom of the slaves; Emerson standing up before the Harvard students and faculty, asking for more reason in theology; Tolstoy standing up against the cruelty and the sham of the Russian Orthodox church; John Haynes Holmes, Jane Addams standing for peace in a warring world; Briand standing for a United States of Europe and a peace pact; Judge Ulman standing for religious convictions against compulsory military training in state colleges; Judge Horton standing in the south for justice for the Negroes; Einstein standing for advanced truth and a warless world; Ernest Fremont Tittle and Harry Emerson Fosdick and Francis McConnell standing for the application of the gospel of Christ in this modern social and industrial world: all these, and many more of their same type, are the remnant of Israel! They are the salt of the earth! They are the saviors of the people!

ALWAYS A HEROIC MINORITY

Let us thank God and take courage for having these people who dare to stand up and say that which needs to be said to save the day for righteousness. If the time ever comes when our prophets are under the thumb of some social system or political party, under the control of the state or an economic system, then pity the condition of that civilization! For to muzzle healthy protest is to kill the goose that lays all the golden eggs of progress.

As in the past, so in the future, progress is made by those who battle against the wrong, in places high and low. I have faith to believe that the time will never come when all men will be forced to conform to the will either of the majority or to the desire of some dictator. There will always be, I trust, one or two, or even a few, heroic souls who will say what is upon their hearts, who will cry out the message which the world needs—and pay the penalty for it. And the one will become a minority, and the minority will become the majority, and then the heretic's views will be taken

for granted and save the people. Thus it has been; thus t shall be!

IV

"Then Gamaliel stood up!" He did more than most f us Christians dare to do today. We Christians are oted today for our compromise, for our evasion of esus' moral teachings, for our escape from the ethical hallenge of the Christ. Most of us are mixed up with he wrong things, with the wrong people, with the vrong ideals; and we dare not stand up and be counted or Christ.

It is very easy to remain seated, especially when the najority is fierce and noisy. It takes little courage, onviction or conscience to remain seated. In fact, most eople never rise to a point of order; if things go against heir training and best thinking and highest judgment hey keep quiet and let the evil take its course. They lo not believe, as Paul did, in overcoming evil with the ood.

But there are some things which good people must bject to. Gamaliel was the most peace-loving of men, et he could not sit idly by while several good men, nnocent men, godly men, were being unjustly pun-shed. Jesus could not remain silent in the presence of ypocrisy; he could not take a passive course when he aw the temple of God being made into a den of rob-ers. Vice, injustice, impurity, greed, hypocrisy ought o bring us Christians to our feet, as one great host, Protestant and Catholic together. Graft, kidnaping, gambling, murder, war, ought to cause every single Christian to stand on his feet and protest. From now n we must be more protestant than ever; protesting vhenever and wherever injustice, vengeance, prejudice nd selfishness reveal themselves. For if we do not rotest, who will?

WANTED—GAMALIELS

"Then Gamaliel stood up!" He did so in the face f great opposition. But his objection saved the day for he Christian religion. The time has again come when Christianity faces serious difficulties on every hand. We eed our Gamaliels, and we need fearless disciples too, vho will obey God rather than men; who will disregard he warnings and the commands of all Sanhedrins that e, and every single day "teach and preach the gospel f Jesus in the temple and at home."

Let us keep splendid loyalties,
For we are falling prey to lesser things.
What use are breath and strength if we no longer feel
The thrill of battle for some holy cause
Or hear high morning bugles calling us away?
Let brave hearts dare to break the truce with things
Ere we have lost our ancient heritage.
Are we to gain a world to lose our souls,
Souls which can keep faith until death
And die, triumphant, in some crimson dawn?

Nay, we must keep faith with the unnumbered brave
Who pushed aside horizons, that we might reach
The better things: We cannot rest until
We have put courage once more on her throne;
For Honor clamors for her heritage,
And Right still claims a kingdom of its own.

God's Imponderables

BY EDWIN W. BISHOP

Now abide faith, hope, love. 1 *Corinthians* 13:13.

ESTIMATING imponderables. Don't you know we are doing that all the time? Things that do not register on any Toledo scales, that are not seen through any telescope or microscope, that make no impact on your ear drums, that you can neither taste nor smell, are nevertheless estimated by you every day. They collect in your thoughts, they enter into your decisions, they are potent factors in the pattern weaving of life.

Imponderables! Unweighables on our crude coarse scales! Even scientists are estimating them in these days. As they have divided and subdivided apparently solid matter into smaller and smaller units they have successively approached the imponderables from the molecule to the atom, from the atom to the electron and proton, from the electron and proton to the neutron, and from the neutron to a flash of force! A solid desk seems ponderable enough, and it is in the mass, but in its last analysis it is but a bundle of energy, a universe of force, with all the imponderable distances of a milky way! You awake on an April morning. Your body is ponderable, your dress and your clothes are ponderable, you sit at the breakfast table and what you eat and drink is ponderable, isn't it all materialistic and ponderable? No, for the cheery word your wife gave you as you left for the office with the resultant warmth and comfort in your heart was one of the imponderables; a telegram you received one day announcing the death of a member of the family was an imponderable; even the gray clouds overcasting the sun in the afternoon and chilling the atmosphere were imponderables which registered in your soul reaching and disturbing the citadels of your life! The imponderables! The unweighables! They affect you, they mold you, they register in you, they are mighty factors in weaving the life pattern and making you what you are.

We therefore must estimate these imponderables, they have spiritual weight if they do not have material weight, and they exert vast influences upon our lives. Many catalogues and lists of them can be made which you would all recognize as true, but there is one very short yet comprehensive summary which one of the great ones of earth once made that is understandable, unforgettable, and which has a large bearing upon our present day affairs, namely, the summary coming at the end of the 13th chapter of I Corinthians, "But now abide faith, hope, love, these three." They are the everlasting imponderables of God.

I

Take the first of these three imponderables—faith. As you think of it, don't confuse it with a stained glass window representing an angel with arched wings holding a lily, nor with an ultra pious story in a religious magazine, but think of it as a strong dynamic law which conditions the universe. Faith is one of God's

imponderables. Jesus was motivated by it through and through. He was full of faith himself and his constant command to sick people, to troubled people, to sinning people was to have faith. The faith we are speaking about is not magic, it is not superstition, it is not some occult-esoteric power which is available only to the initiated and can operate in violence and contradiction to all other known laws, it is not irrationality raised to the nth power, it is something which is reasonable, which has its own boundaries as do other forces both divine and human, it has its constructive necessary and valuable role in the universe and in human life, and happy and blessed are we when we consciously and voluntarily place ourselves on the side of this farflung and divinely permeating law, riding with it to victory instead of bucking up against it to defeat.

A very common human error is that faith is opposed to reason. St. Paul who classified faith as one of the great imponderables never once suggested that. He did not say that faith was opposed to reason but only to sight, and that only because sight was too crude and too coarse a physical thing to soar into the depths that faith reveals. "We walk by faith and not by sight," he wrote. Yes, and what he meant we can now readily understand when we place a telescope before our material eyes and lengthen out our vision into spaces utterly undreamed of before, or when by radio we capture for our ears vibrations from realms we did not before know even existed! Like an iceberg that is seven-eighths unseen, so God's imponderables are constituting a universe all around us only the surface of which we touch with our five senses, but the depths of which call to our imaginations and to our spiritual capacities only as deep can call unto deep.

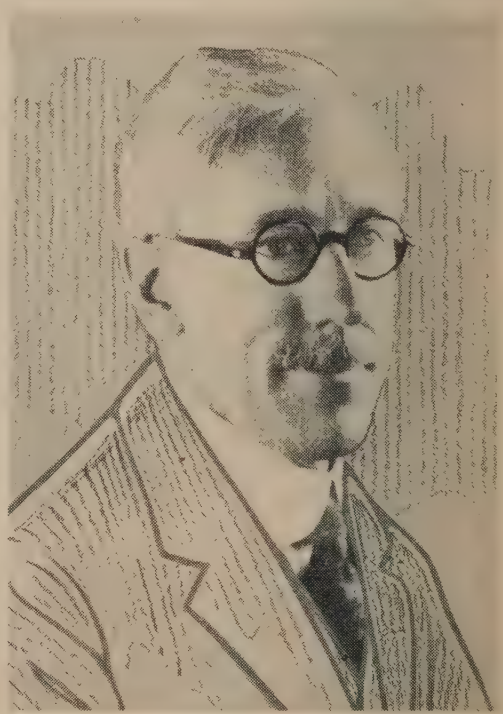
This imponderable of faith has a very close application to our common situation in recent times. It is generally agreed that the great depression has persisted largely because of a lack of faith, a destruction of confidence. In our own country the land is here just as it always has been and it has been productive. Harvests have been bounteous and there is a surplus of food. No great calamity of earthquake, fire, or pestilence has swept the nation. There are just as many houses as ever. Factory facilities are greater than they ever were. We can manufacture all we want for ourselves and to spare. Man power and woman power is abundant. Millions have been crying for work. Gold reserves are adequate. There is enough minted and printed money to make the wheels go round again. The basic material values are still here. Why then the long continuing depression?

Because some imponderables have been lacking! Faith gone, public confidence sorely wounded; credit, a far more important factor in business prosperity than cash, had fled. Faith, one of God's imponderables, faith in men, faith in institutions, faith in the wisdom of government, faith in social security, attempting to fly with a broken wing. The great depression long ago passed from the material stage into a spiritual one. Re-financing corporations, readjustments in expenditures, reallocation of taxes, and all the other machinery summoned to the task have been necessary and advisable, but only a nationwide resurgence of faith can unloose the imponderable energy to reverse the current.

A business man who has never had much religion for export said to me some time ago with great earnestness, "Only God can help us now." On a beautiful afternoon I assisted a patient trembling with physical weakness down the steps from one of our hospitals. I remarked on the beauty and cheer of the afternoon sun. "Yes," he replied, "if we could only get this sunlight into our souls times would change," and then he added pointing his cane upward, "It all can come from Him!"

II

Another of God's imponderables is hope. The apostle Paul said, "We are saved by hope." In his symbolism



Edwin W. Bishop

Paul mentioned the different parts of the Christian's armor as interchangeable, the shield and the breastplate meaning now one thing and now another, but the helmet, that which crowned the head, was ever and always the hope of salvation. There was a reason. Without his helmet on no ancient soldier could hold up his head in battle. In direct contrast to legalistic Moses, to weeping Jeremiah, to moody and often despondent Mohammed, even to gentle but on the whole sad Buddha, Jesus was one of the few world teachers who was motivated by an immense hope. He seemed to radiate hope even in the darkest places and situations. Was it a prodigal son? There was hope. Was it a sinning woman? There was hope. Was it a hated Samaritan? The Samaritan might be a good Samaritan —there was hope. Was it a Roman captain, one of the feared overlords—there was hope: "I have not

found so great faith, no, not in all Israel." Was it a despised poll tax collector? He could become Matthew the disciple. There was hope. Was it in oriental estimation a good-for-nothing brat of a child—there was hope: Jesus took a little child and pointed out how like it was to the kingdom of heaven. Surely hope is one of God's saving imponderables.

III

The third imponderable of God that abides is love. Paul declared it was the greatest of the three. So did Henry Drummond in that charming essay, "The Greatest Thing in the World." In the exalting of love, however, there should be no disparagement of faith and hope. If love is the greatest it is because it undergirds the other two. When Nansen was taking soundings in the Arctic ocean his line was too short, so he wrote in his dairy for that day, "Deeper than that." The next day he lengthened his line but still it was inefficient. The entry in the diary again was, "Deeper than that." The next day Nansen gathered all the line on shipboard and took his third sounding. It failed to reach bottom. So he entered the diary again, "Deeper than that." Love is like that. It is the deepest sounding in the universe. It is unfathomable. It is God's greatest imponderable. "Love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth." Love is God. And God is Love.

To feel the beauty, truth, and sufficiency of this is not difficult, but to translate the feeling into human actions is another matter, and therein we fail. We give the concept lip service but we do not produce the fruits. Love's greatest contrast is selfishness. And selfishness is in the saddle. Love seeketh not its own but selfishness is always seeking its own. The world has been through one of the greatest orgies of selfishness it has ever witnessed and we are suffering the consequences thereof. There was national selfishness—grab what one could get anywhere and thus secure one's place in the sun a la Japan. There was private selfishness—the will to outwit and outgamble other human beings for private profit, leaving them to hold the bag. In legitimate commerce both parties to an honest trade benefit thereby, but in illegitimate gambling someone loses for everyone who wins. Selfishness, not love, was in the saddle in 1929. Will anyone dispute it?

We could build a new glorious magnificent world on the present ruins if publicly and privately we would and could dethrone selfishness and let love, God's greatest imponderable, come into its own. These three imponderables, faith, hope, love, have not been annihilated by the present impasse: they are still here, they abide with the eternities, we can rejoice in them and utilize them if we choose.

But now *abide,* faith, hope, love, these three! They abide as God's imponderables, forever and ever.

Our influence should be exerted now not simply for peace, but for justice; and sometimes we overlook the latter; for the great underlying cause of international discord is injustice, of which war is a visible and terrible symptom. The present injustices on the map of the world should be faced frankly by every nation. Until that is done, all peace moves will be only weak palliations.

Henry Knox Sherrill.

A Pastoral Prayer

By Albea Godbold

O GOD, our Father, we thank Thee for a gospel which challenges the best that is in us. We are glad to follow a Christ whose religion calls for real manhood and womanhood—character, power, insight, courage, and devotion to God and to the needs of men.

We thank Thee for the ideals which were embodied in that lonely Man who gave his life on the cross, ideals which through him keep pushing themselves insistently into the thinking of mankind in every generation, ideals which, refusing to be ignored, lay hold on so many men and impel them to struggle for a better world, even the kingdom of God.

We thank Thee for the ideal of a warless world, wherein nation shall not lift up sword against nation any more. Forbid that that ideal should loosen its grip on the world now, even though there be wars and rumors of wars. We thank Thee for the ideal of economic justice which demands for all honest work, fair pay, and a just share of life's good things, so that little children will not suffer need and so that every home shall have opportunity for the abundant life. Let that ideal disturb our sleep and prod our conscience until we shall achieve the goal. We thank Thee for the ideal of a social order free from the curse of strong drink. Let that ideal challenge us until we shall completely destroy the demon of drink. We thank Thee for the ideal of a world in which men of all races shall look upon and treat all others as brothers. We thank Thee for the ideal of democracy that would give every man the right to true freedom and the right to pursue happiness. We thank Thee for the ideal of the truly good and perfect life as it was in Christ Jesus. May all such worthy ideals lay hold on us and refuse to be ignored by us in our day.

O God, we realize our sins and our shortcomings. Too often we trifle with the great realities of life. Too often we are indifferent toward these things of eternal significance and of everlasting importance. Forgive us and strengthen us by Thy might in the inner man. Help us to open our hearts to the leading of Thy Divine Spirit that stands at the door and knocks. Help us to remember our high privilege of fellowship with Thee in all our work, and may all that we do be begun, continued and ended in God. In the Master's name. Amen.

On the Reading of Sermons

By Lewis H. Chrisman

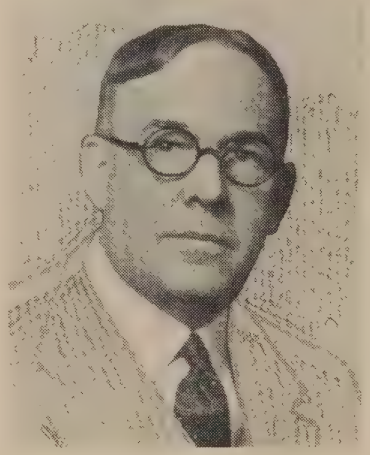
A WELL-WRITTEN sermon is delightful, stimulating and spiritually enriching reading. This statement is made with the absolute knowledge that it will not pass unchallenged. There is no sentence more actively circulated in homiletic circles than the bromidic combination of words to the effect that "sermons are not worth reading." Just why is this particular type of printed matter so completely unworthy? Is the sermon invariably badly written and devoid of ideas? Even the preacher who with an ostentatious pride declares, "I never read sermons," would hardly answer these questions in the affirmative. Therefore, the minimizer of the value of sermonic literature must shoulder the burden of proof.

And it is an exceptionally heavy burden. Preachers have made decidedly substantial contributions to English literature. John Donne, Robert Herrick, George Herbert, John Bunyan, Thomas Traherne, Isaac Watts, Thomas Fuller, Jonathan Swift, Sydney Smith, Charles Kingsley and John Henry Newman are but a part of the company of clerical authors. Samuel Taylor Coleridge at the beginning of his career was a preacher. "Charles," said he to his former schoolmate at Christ's Hospital, "did you ever hear me preach?" "I never heard you do anything else," said Lamb in the stammering accents which added distinction and piquancy to his wit. When young Ralph Waldo Emerson resigned from the ministry of the Second Church of Boston he utilized his platform ability upon the lecture platform. The study of Emerson's sermon manuscripts is a task yet awaiting some scholar, but is it not safe to infer that some, at least, of the sentences of the pulpit discourses found their way into the addresses which made the stickit-minister from Concord the most popular lecturer in America of his generation? And as to some of the lectures, we know what became of them. When Emerson published them, he called them "essays," and they constitute what many regard as America's noblest contribution to the literature of the world. Would it not be somewhat difficult to prove that Emerson's thought was not worth reading when he expressed it in sermonic form?

● *Lincoln, Carlyle and Ruskin as Preachers*

But this thought has wider implications. Silvester Horne in his noble valedictory, "The Romance of Preaching," the Lyman Beecher Lectures for 1914, takes the position that God's order of preaching friars is a far wealthier company than has been generally recognized. He says: "America today will not forget to blazon upon the roll of her great nineteenth century preachers of righteousness the name of Abraham Lincoln as well as of Henry Ward Beecher: and Englishmen who are justly proud of Robert Hall and Thomas Binney, Dale and Spurgeon cannot forget to number also among her national prophets Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin and John Bright."

Carlyle's peasant parents had intended him for the pulpit. Like many other Scottish parents their dearest ambition had been that their nobly



Lewis H. Chrisman

endowed first-born should "wag his pow in the pulpit." John James Ruskin and his stately, overwhelming wife wanted to see their only son become a bishop. Neither Carlyle nor Ruskin ever wore a black Geneva gown nor stood behind the sacred desk but both were preeminently prophets of the eternal truths of God. Neither of them can be read intelligently by those who are spiritually blind and deaf. Passage after passage from the works of both could fit perfectly, in language, content and spirit, into a sermon pulsating with prophetic power, reminding us of the blazing eloquence of an Amos of Tekoa or a Jeremiah of Anathoth. And it stands to reason that these flaming words which have been a source of inspiration to generations would not have been devoid of value if they had been encased in the conventional sermonic setting.

In the succession of masters of English prose Dr. Robert South, canon of Christ Church, Oxford, prebend of Westminster and chaplain of Charles II, deserves a place near the top of the list. In his old age he was a contemporary of Addison of whom Samuel Johnson uttered the once familiar sentence, "Whoever wishes to attain an English style familiar but not coarse and elegant but not ostentatious must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison." A comparison of the prose of South with that of Addison by no means casts discredit upon the former. Although he may not have had the mellifluous ease of the coffee house oracle of the days of poor Queen Anne, he more than makes up for this lack by the sinewy vigor and incisive power of his sledgehammer sentences. Dr. South died in 1716, but his style has more in common with the best of modern prose than that of any other man of his generation, or that of a single one of his predecessors. In telling how he trained himself Henry Ward Beecher wrote: "I read old Robert South through and through. I saturated myself with South; I formed much of my style and my handling of texts on his method."

● *Good Sermons As Literature*

In 1863 the brilliant young Clarence King, later the intimate friend of John Hay and Henry Adams, set out across the continent intending to make the journey on horseback from the end of the most western railroad at St. Joseph, Missouri. After many adventures he eventually arrived in California with a traveling library consisting of a "Bible, a Table of Logarithms and a volume of Robertson's sermons." Anybody who has read the rewarding discourses of the Brighton minister will commend King's excellent judgment in the selection of reading matter. Of course, there are sermons that are not worth reading. The same is true of editorials, of addresses on divers subjects, of essays. It would, however, be hard to prove that this particular type of prose has some inherent characteristic which invariably makes it worthless reading. Washington Gladden once said: "I maintain that good sermons may be and ought to be good literature, that the free direct conversational handling of a theme in the presence of an audience makes good reading in a book."

If a sermon possesses the qualities which make it helpful to those who hear it, it is, as a rule, excellent reading. It can be judged by the same standards by which we measure other kinds of material. To throw all sermons into the limbo of the worthless is a severe reflection on the ministerial profession. One wonders why preach-

ers themselves are so frequently guilty of such crass professional disloyalty. Or does the preacher who sneers at the idea of sermons being so empty and futile always except his own discourses? If this is the case, the minimizing of the sermon which comes from this source can possibly be explained on the basis of a defense reaction. One would hesitate, however, to give such an explanation too general an application.

● *How Beecher and Jowett Used Sermons*

For the preacher himself the published sermon most obviously has a unique value. In addition to the reading of Dr. South, Henry Ward Beecher was an assiduous student of Isaac Barrow. Moreover, he read Howe, Butler, Sherlock and "Edwards particularly." In this way he was "awakening his own preaching gifts" and learning what to emulate and what to avoid. When Jowett decided to preach a sermon on a given text, one of the first steps in his assiduous labor of preparation was to make a study of the method used by some of the great preachers of the world in their treatment of that particular passage. Although this might not be the ideal method for all of us, it is entirely logical to proceed upon the assumption that the man whose main business in life is the preparation and preaching of sermons is intensely interested in this form of prose discourse. The preacher who is not a lover of sermons is an inexplicable paradox.

Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes once expressed himself as follows: "The clergy, however, rarely hear any sermons except what they preach themselves. A dull preacher might be conceived, therefore, to lapse into a state of quasi-heathenism simply for want of religious instruction." Whether or not we are to take seriously the "autocrat's" solicitude over the possibility of some of the clerical brotherhood's backsliding on account of a lack of spiritual guidance, the fact remains that preachers hear little preaching. Even radio sermons for the most part are broadcast at a time when he is prevented by his routine duties from enjoying the pleasure of listening to them. This fact has a wide homiletical significance. It means that the preacher has comparatively few contacts which would tend to jolt him out of his homiletical ruts.

● *Saving the Preacher from 'Homiletical Baggage'*

Back in the years which marked the turn of the century the students in a small and somewhat provincial theological seminary were carefully cautioned to avoid reading sermons for fear of losing their originality. The result was that most of them had to plod through their careers hindered by a lot of worthless and impeding homiletical baggage. Certain very definite rules for preaching had been hammered into them. These pedantic and arbitrary precepts had been long since antedated, but most of the graduates of that particular institution would have felt that they were failing in a most signal duty if they had to the slightest degree deviated from them. The result was the continuation of a type of preaching which in environments less isolated intellectually had been superseded at least a half century before. It is obvious that the reading of current homiletical material would have prevented the occurrence of such a professional tragedy.

● *Preaching With a 'Fighting Edge'*

Vital preaching reflects life. The prophet stands in the watch tower. For example, no man stood nearer to the life of the eighteenth century than John Wesley. The student of that period of history positively cannot ignore him. A reading of the sermons of Jeremy Taylor brings us again and again into contact with the varied life of the seventeenth century. Dr. South's virulent anti-puritanism is revolting to those of us whose sympathies in the England of his day are the result of our youthful love of the golden antitheses of Macaulay, but how much he adds to our insight into the currents of the life of those long-vanished generations! In reading the biographical literature of the nineteenth century there is probably no name that we meet more frequently than that of Henry Ward Beecher. In what varied ways did his life touch the history of the America of his day! In his sermons we see reflected one after another the issues which rocked that mid-century world. And even more distinctly can we trace the course of the national life of an earlier day in the discourses of the elder Beecher. Wherever Lyman Beecher was there was something happening. He had what Theodore Roosevelt called "the fighting edge." Dueling, intemperance and slavery were only a few of the social wrongs against which he lifted his ready and potent lance.

● *Good Sermons Reflect Contemporary Life*

Effective preaching is timely as well as timeless. To prove this, one does not have to go back into the past for his illustrations. It is highly evident in the sermonic literature of today. A man in touch with the message of the modern pulpit could not be unfamiliar with the most significant trends of contemporary life. The reading of good sermons keeps an individual alive to the most momentous aspects of the modern world. A minister was once acridly described as "a man of the eighteen-nineties." Such a characterization is even more adverse than it seems on the surface. President Butler speaks of those who "die at thirty and are buried at sixty." All of us are prone to become prisoners of our own yesterdays. This intellectual calamity will not happen to the man who has developed the habit of reading the sermons preached by those who from the watch tower of the prophet look out upon the crowded ways of our western world.

Dr. Richard Roberts epigramatically remarks: "A sermon is none the worse for being good reading as well as good hearing." Certainly not! And more frequently than not it is excellent reading. The spending of an evening browsing among contemporary sermons is a delightful, heartening and illuminating experience. That time which is spent in sermon-tasting is most emphatically not wasted.

THE gravest peril which the church and nation face today comes from those who would render unto Caesar the things that are God's. The kingdom is God's, not Hitler's or Mussolini's or that of any earthly ruler.

Jesus chose the method of love against the might of the sword, and exposed the hypocrisies of secular power and the spiritual futility of pagan ideals. Against the atheism of force and irresponsible egotism, he stands for the persuasive power of love expressed in the regime of liberty, justice and good will.

M. H. LICHLITER.

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• WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE •

REV. JOHN PAUL JONES *is minister* of the Union Church of Bay Ridge (Presbyterian), Brooklyn, N. Y. He went to Brooklyn from Troy, N. Y., where he ministered at First Presbyterian church. Mr. Jones was graduated from Westminster college, Fulton, Mo., and completed his theological course at Union Theological seminary.

*Following three years of service as di*rector of religious education at Washington Congregational church, Toledo, O., Rev. CHARLES F. BANNING studied at Colgate-Rochester Divinity school. From 1925 to 1929 he ministered at Delaware Street Baptist church in Syracuse, and during that period was chairman of the New York Youth council. In 1929 he went to New York and for six years was pastor of Richmond Hill Baptist church in that city. Since the fall of last year he has led the activities of First Baptist church, Columbus, O.

Rev. EDWIN W. BISHOP *has been min*ister of Plymouth Congregational church, Lansing, Mich. since 1918. Earlier pastorates were those at Concord, Mass., Grand Rapids, Mich., and Brockton, Mass. Mr. Bishop graduated from Hartford Theological seminary and pursued graduate courses in the University of Berlin.

Rev. ALLAN KNIGHT CHALMERS *suc*ceeded Dr. Charles E. Jefferson at the famous Broadway Tabernacle, New York city, about six years ago. Earlier pastorates were in West Springfield, Mass., New Haven, Conn., and Buffalo, N. Y. Mr. Chalmers spent a number of years in teaching, but following his overseas service in the world war he determined to give his life to the Christian ministry. He received his education at Johns Hopkins university and at Yale Divinity school, and was ordained in the Congregational ministry in 1922.

Graduating from McCormick (now Presbyterian) seminary, Chicago, in 1917, Rev. HARRISON RAY ANDERSON became pastor of the Presbyterian church in Ellsworth, Kan., and from 1921 to 1928 he ministered at First Presbyterian church, Wichita. During the past eight years he has led the activities of Fourth Presbyterian church, Chicago, where Dr. John Timothy Stone was minister for many years.

*After graduating from Colgate-Roches*ter Divinity school in 1928, Rev. STANLEY I. STUBER, encouraged by a graduate scholarship, was awarded a Th.M. degree by Colgate-Rochester. For several years he has been pastor of the Baptist church of Clifton Springs, N. Y. Mr. Stuber has become widely known as one of the editors of the unique Twentieth Century Quarterly, published in Chicago.

Rev. ALBEA GODBOLD *is minister of the* First Methodist church, south, Conway, Ark.

Dr. LEWIS H. CHRISMAN *is professor of* English literature in West Virginia Wesleyan college, and is the author of "Ten-Minute Sermons."

TITLES AND TEXTS — What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

JOHN HAYNES HOLMES, Community church, New York. "Is There a God?" Job 11:7—"Canst thou by searching find out God?"

DAVID A. MACLENNAN, Eaton Memorial (United), Toronto, Ont. "Undying Flame." Lev. 6:13—" . . . the fire shall ever be burning on the altar; it shall never go out."

H. C. NOBLE, First Presbyterian, Downey, Cal. "The Splendid Commonplace." 1 Cor. 7:24—"Brethren, let each man wherein he was called therein abide with God."

WILLIAM T. LYTLE, Ben Avon United Presbyterian, Pittsburgh, Pa. "How Much Do We Weigh on God's Scales?" Dan. 5:27—"Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting."

ROY W. ZIMMER, First Presbyterian, Topeka, Kan. "Golgothas and Gardens." John 19:41—"Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden."

HENRY J. SMITH, Petworth Baptist, Washington, D. C. "Invisible Permanence." 2 Cor. 4:18—"For the things that are not seen are eternal."

A. DALE FIERS, High Street Church of Christ, Hamilton, O. "The Ultimate Futility of Selfishness." Eccl. 2:18—"And I hated all my labor . . . seeing that I must leave it to the man that shall be after me."

GILBERT H. CURRY, Methodist, Marengo, Ind. "Beginning at Home." Judg. 6:25—"Throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it."

M. S. HOSTETLER, Community Presbyterian, Greenriver, Utah. "One Man Power." Acts 5:34—"Then stood there up one in the council."

RICHARD G. DOUGLAS, Mystic Side Congregational, Everett, Mass. "In Defense of Spendthrifts." Matt. 13:45, 46—"The kingdom of heaven is like a trader in search of five pearls, and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it."

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

. . . . . .
Title of sermon

. . . . . .
Text used (write out the text)

. . . . . .
Name of minister

. . . . . .
Name of church

. . . . . .
Address

THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The Event of the Month

NOT merely the event of the month but the event of the decade is the granting of a democratic constitution to Soviet Russia by the communist dictatorship. Announcement was made on June 11 of a plan for the complete reorganization of the government on a basis which provides for universal suffrage of both sexes by secret ballot; a bicameral parliament whose lower house of about 600 members is to be elected by popular vote; a senate of about 100 members to represent the seven autonomous republics now comprising the U. S. S. R. and four more to be carved out of the larger ones—eleven in all; a president to be elected by the two houses in joint session; and an independent judiciary to be elected by popular vote for short terms. This in barest outline is the political structure. Economically, the proposed constitution establishes the communist distinction between producer's goods and consumer's goods, with public ownership of the former and private ownership of the latter which includes "houses, household furnishing, articles of personal consumption and savings accounts." Religious freedom is guaranteed, church and state separated, freedom of speech and press granted. The constitution will be submitted to the all-union soviet congress for ratification in November. It marks a development of immeasurable importance. It is hardly probable that the dictatorship will suddenly disappear, but its action in laying the ground plan of a democracy by providing for the progressive relinquishing of its own power is a new phenomenon in human history.

Constitutional Communism!

The Book of the Month

THE RETURN TO RELIGION, *by Henry C. Link. The Macmillan Company, $1.75.*

THIS book is important for the minister in two respects: as a novel apologetic, and as a volume of practical help in handling the personal problems which arise in his pastoral relations with individual men and women. The author is a consulting psychologist. Four thousand persons have sought his aid in fifteen years of professional practice. At college he lost the religious faith in which he had been brought up. He became a confirmed secularist and rationalist. At last he has returned to religion not only in conviction but in practice. He goes to church. In a long paragraph he gives his reasons for going to church, which he sums up at the end in a sentence thus: "I go, in short, because I hate to go and because I know that it will do me good." How did he regain his religion? Not by a fervent emotional conversion, he says, but by gradually becoming aware that in prescribing for people he was compelled to have recourse to the very language of religion. He could not convey his meaning adequately in mere scientific language. This set him thinking, with the result that the whole religious situation—doctrine, church, Bible, worship, customary activities—took on new meaning. He saw religion as the *savior of personality* from the frustration, instability and unhappiness which characterized his patients. So in honesty he yielded to it himself. The book is rich with sane and illuminating counsel for both young and old. It punctures much psycho-analytical nonsense, especially in matters of sex. Take this statement as an example: "The finality of marriage and its vows, as expressed in the ritual of the churches, rightly emphasizes the fact that marriage is an obligation to create a better life, not an experiment in compatibility." The effect of reading this book is to give one the feeling that religion is no emotional luxury but a vital necessity of common living.

A Thought for the Month

THE shadow of evil which seems to trail every human good is nowhere more evident than in those concrete events in which we find our highest spiritual opportunities. Every opportunity has two sides: it is just as truly an opportunity for evil as for good, for destruction as for construction, for reaction as for progress, for sin as for grace. History is not automatically progressive. It presents man with recurring tides which, taken at the flood, lead on to fortune; but these same tides may be taken at the flood by ignorant or evil men and lead on to terrible misfortune. It seems that the situations in which divine Providence is most likely to meet us are those which have evil causes and which are as truly pregnant with evil consequences as with good. A war is a terrible evil, both in its causes and its consequences; but it is also an immeasurable opportunity; it lays bare with a lurid and vivid realism the evil forces which flourish in society and gives mankind an opportunity to deal with them. The depression, with all its woes, has forced upon statesman, scholar, and common man alike, an education in the nature of our economic and cultural order, dispelling illusions and revealing evils of which our complacent optimism had been unaware. The discouraging futility of the League of Nations and the Kellogg Pact as a restraint upon Japan, Italy and Germany, presents peace workers with their greatest opportunity, because it compels us to face the evil causes of war that inhere in our civilization itself and to dig deeper than the pledges of impotent governments for the foundation of world peace. In our personal experiences and relationships it is in the guise of pain or illness or defeat or loss—and even of sin—that Providence presents us with our highest opportunities. All of which was clear to the mind of St. Paul who declared that where sin abounds grace does much more abound. He might also have declared that where grace abounds you may expect to find sin abounding!

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